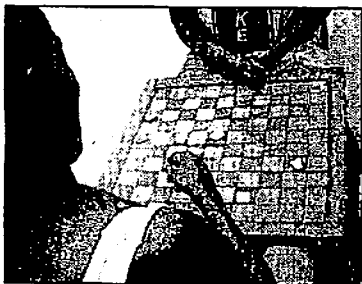


DHS Graduate Working to Establish Library in Rural Ghana

Bob Offer-Westort, a 1999 DHS graduate has been conducting anthropological research in Adwafo, a rural Asante village outside Kumasi, Ghana for several months.

Offer-Westort is a senior at Long Island University's Friends World Program. He spent all last year in Ghana, and after spending the summer at home in Duxbury, is back in Ghana until December. The anthropological study, which is his senior thesis, focuses on the culture of draughts, a game related to checkers, which takes center stage in the socialization of men in the village.



The game of Draughts is a form of socialization in Adwafo, Ghana.

While he was home, Offer-Westort decided to start a library program in Adwafo to help assist with literacy in the village.

While literacy is taught in schools, few people can afford the books that it takes to maintain reading skills. Thus, children are not able to benefit from available scholarships or score well on school entrance exams.

Offer-Westort is now trying to establish a library where the citizens of Adwafo and neighboring villages will have access to the reading materials which, in combination with a couple of years of grammar school and a recently-established adult literacy local initiative, would be able to sustain a more literate local population.

Offer-Westort worked at Westwinds during his senior year at DHS, an experience that should help him in his latest endeavor. As he is raising money, he is consulting with teachers in Asante to derive an appropriate book list. Offer-Westort will then purchase as many books as his fundraising efforts allow. The books will be housed in a corner of the existing school.

Offer-Westort has made an impact on the village of Adwafo even before his library

initiative. For his thesis, he decided he needed to draw a map of the village, something its residents had never seen before. A larger version of the map is now part of the village's official records.

Villagers were also impressed when he returned to Ghana this August with blue hair, his mother, Mary Ann Offer said.

"They wanted to know if he could bring them stuff to turn their hair blue as well."



Bob Offer-Westort with his host family in Adwafo, Ghana. Approximately 650 people live in the village, though most young men Offer-Westort's age go to the nearby city of Kumasi to make money before returning to start a family.

Traditional Asante hospitality reigns in the village, and Offer-Westort has found that he is best able to compensate them by teaching and introducing small gift items that are new to their community. The children were especially entertained by the bottles of bubble solution that he brought back with him from Duxbury.

Prior to his work in Ghana, Offer-Westort studied in Thailand, and taught html programming in the local dialect in a village in India. He hopes to

return to Ghana in some sort of teaching position next year, Mary Ann Offer said.

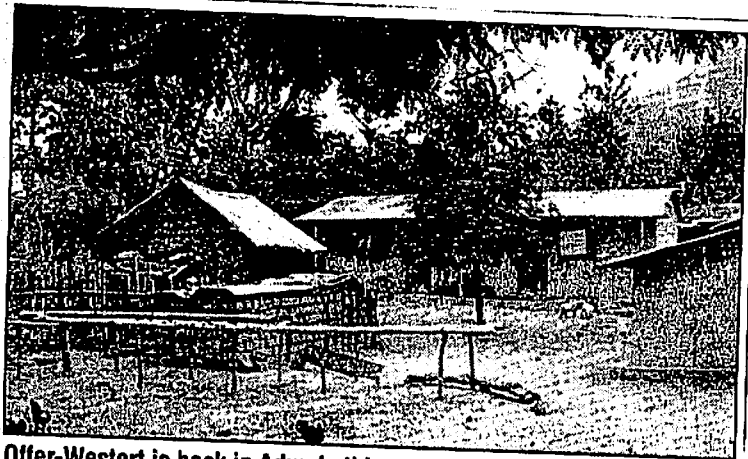
If he does return, he will have an apartment available in Kumasi, the largest town close to Adwafo. Offer-Westort uses the apartment now for the electricity it has, which enables him to contact his family in Duxbury and his advisor in Long Island via his lap top computer.

Rent in Ghana is traditionally paid up front, for a total of five years. Offer-Westort was

asked to pay in advance for a period of 13 years – a total of \$348.

"That's a fraction of what his lap top cost, and he'll always have a place to stay," his mother noted.

Donations to help Offer-Westort in his effort to buy books and plastic protective covers can be made either at Westwinds or to Bob Offer-Westort, P.O. Box 958, Duxbury. Checks are welcomed, but must be made out to Bob Offer-Westort, as they will be deposited in a U.S. bank and drawn upon electronically, due to banking restrictions in Ghana. Even small donations help a lot. Asante books range in price from about .70 to \$8.



Offer-Westort is back in Adwalo this year, after spending all last year in the village. He drew the first map of the village, which is now part of their official records.